



ST ALPHEGE CE INFANT SCHOOL

Head of School Mrs Jacqui Spinks,
Oxford Street, Whitstable, Kent, CT5 1DA, TEL: 01227 272977, Email: headteacher@st-alphege.kent.sch.uk

29th September 2016

Dear Parents,

As you are aware attendance is a big drive for the school this year and features as part of the School Development Plan. As a school we are judged on our attendance figures by the Local Authority and Ofsted. **The benchmark for whole school attendance has risen this year and is now set as 97%.** We therefore, need your continued help and support to raise our attendance percentages. Just ten days over an academic year will reduce your child's attendance to 95%.

If we were to be inspected by Ofsted, the school could not be judged as Good or Outstanding if our attendance figures are below the benchmark. We are very proud of our school and the fantastic teaching and learning that happens here and it would be terrible if the one aspect that let us down during an inspection was our attendance figures. All schools are required to inform the local authority of any pupils who are regularly absent from school, have irregular attendance, or have missed 10 school days or more without the school's permission. Schools are also under a safeguarding duty, to investigate any unexplained absences.

We are aware that young children can become ill and their immunities are often lower than older children. I want to assure you that we of course do not want you to send your child to school if they are too unwell to be here.

We will not authorise any term time holidays, we do understand that family circumstances can affect when you are able to book holidays and that the price increases during official school holidays can seem unreasonable. However, we would ask that you kindly work with us on this issue and that holidays are not booked in term times. If you have to book a holiday during term time, this must be requested in writing to the Head of School in advance and you may be asked to attend a meeting to discuss this request. The Local Authority recommend that we issue penalty notices when holiday is taken during term times, therefore, we reserve the right to issue a penalty notice for any holiday requests. I would like to explain that the school in no way financially benefits from these penalty notices and that they are issued at Local Authority level.

I am sure you are all aware of the effects that persistent absence has on a child, not only academically but also socially and emotionally. Significant periods of time away from school can have a negative impact on a child's wellbeing, sense of belonging and friendships. The impact on a child's learning is also significant. The Government expectations for children have raised significantly over the past two years and any time away from school will lead to gaps in a child's



learning. Teaching and learning builds on the skills the children have acquired over a period of time and children will find it hard to catch up following any periods away from school. Our school data reflects that children with attendance under 95% are far less likely to reach expected levels by the end of an academic year despite their academic potential. As each academic year builds on the skills previously taught, this can also affect their future learning.

We have a duty to inform you of the external pressures placed on us as a school. We will always do what we believe to be in the best interests of your child and that is for them to attend school as regularly as possible. I am of course happy to discuss this in more detail with any parent who wishes to do so.

I would like to say a heartfelt thanks you to you all for working with us on this matter and I hope to see our attendance figures rise as the year progresses. We will also be awarding certificates to the children each term for good attendance. These will be awarded in the first week back after each half term break.



Gold
Award

A Gold Award certificate will be given to each child achieving 100% attendance in that term



Silver
Award

Children will receive a Silver Award certificate if their attendance for the term is above 97%



Bronze
Award

A Bronze Award certificate will be given for any child with improved attendance. This will be awarded at any level as long as it shows improvement from the previous term.

Many thanks for your continued support. Let's make our attendance Outstanding this year!

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jacqui Spinks'.

Jacqui Spinks
Head of School